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THE EXPLOSION AT ROME.

By ADA M. TROTTER.

WE were roused at a few minutes past seven on the morning of April 23d by a sensation akin to earthquake. The house rocked and shook from the foundations; windows and doors were burst open; and a few moments later, a terrific explosion took place, which drew us all to the window, for the sound of glass falling and smashing in every direction led us to imagine a bomb had exploded at our very doors. But our first glance showed us that the scene of disaster was at some distance from us, for over the Quirinal Palace a dense column of smoke arose, assuming the form of a gigantic pine-tree, afterwards wind-driven to St Peter's, where it obscured the mighty dome from our view. As the crowd saw the position of the cloud, one thought seems to have dominated all hearts—fear for the safety of the King. That the explosion could have taken place at a distance did not occur to any one who had just experienced the severe shock with its accompanying roar.

When we had ascertained that no bomb endangered our lives at our doors, we had time to notice the scene around us with no little appreciation of its unique quality. People in all stages of toilet leaned from the open windows; while others, dressed or only half-clothed, rushed about the streets, gesticulating, calling, shrieking, and gabbling wildly. No one knew more than his neighbours; but then the sensations felt by all at this live moment were so extraordinary, that none could be silent; so every one talked, and naturally no one listened. The servants in our house ran about the corridors, almost in convulsions with terror, praying, imploring protection from the Madonnas which they clasped to their breasts. For the moment it was bedlam within doors and out. The papers afterwards gave graphic accounts of the heart of Rome at this moment. Streets were black with a mass of people, men, women, and children, in every stage

of *deshabille*, directing their steps towards the Quirinal, fearing to find the palace a ruin.

Meantime, the King, who was dressing when the shock came, rushed out in his shirt sleeves, got a cab (report says), and dashed off towards the Porta Portese, divining at once what had happened. He was there by half-past seven, so it will be seen that he must have gone at full speed—in fact, he was one of the first to arrive upon the spot.

The crowd finding at last the true cause of the shock, now struggled to make a way to the gate, a 'motley crowd'—civilians, soldiers, firemen, monks, Sisters of Charity, beggars, workmen, and ladies and gentlemen of all nationalities. It was a sight, perhaps, to be seen only once in a lifetime, this human mass, pouring out of Rome towards the scene of disaster. Arrived there, we find the King the central figure, encouraging the wounded, organising workmen, and when a woman's form was seen beneath the ruins, even tearing away the debris with his own hands in the excitement of the moment. He drew near to the heart of his people this bright April morning, utterly forgetful of self, unconscious of fatigue, moved to tears by the suffering of the brave soldiers, King only by virtue of his power to lead on this terrible field of battle.

The Powder Magazine—which contained two hundred and sixty-five tons of powder, without counting an enormous amount of shells, bombs, cartridges, and other explosives—was situated about a mile and a half beyond the Porta Portese. Now that the accident has happened, the question arises naturally enough, 'Why was such a large quantity of combustible material permitted so near to the city?' To most this question now is to 'shut the door when the steed is stolen,' says an Italian paper.

The inquiry into the cause of the disaster is not yet made at the time I write. The impression given by the leading papers seems to be that it was an accident, not as some thought at first, deliberate design of anarchists. The most credible account—from the *Roman Times*—runs,

that the magazine had been opened the previous day in order to air the contents—that the action of the air combined with the rays of the sun had inflamed the powder into combustion, with disastrous result. It relates that a short time before the catastrophe the captain in charge heard a noise as of sacks of walnuts being moved. He guessed the cause, called all his soldiers out, and ordered them to leave the fort; whilst he, thoroughly aware of the danger, coolly remained until assured that his men were in safety. A few moments later the explosion ensued, and the Powder Magazine was blown to the winds, leaving nothing but a heap of charred ruins to mark the spot where it once stood. And alas for Captain Specemela!—his men got safely away; but he was caught, thrown down, and so battered, cut, and torn, that no hope is entertained of his recovery. [He has since died.] Among the wounded soldiers, too, there is a corporal whose courage and calmness are the talk of the hour. He was one of the last to leave the fatal spot, and was badly injured. It was found necessary to amputate one leg, which was torn to pieces. He refused to take chloroform, and bore the agony of the operation without uttering a word of complaint. When told that if he did not take chloroform he would suffer terribly, he quietly remarked: 'A soldier should not fear pain!' That was a Roman's reply!

And now for an instance of courage which almost rivals the fable of the sentinel found at his post at Pompeii. When the sentry who guarded the Magazine was ordered to leave the spot, he hurried out with gun and baggage. He threw himself flat on the ground when the explosion took place; and when it was all over, though horribly injured, took up his gun and walked back to his post, where he was found by the first rescue party. The King, who, as already said, was one of the first on the field, found the brave soldier, dusty, black in the face, with the clothes almost torn from his body, but with his gun, presenting arms. It is said the hero is to be presented with a gold medal for valour, by request of the King.

All the buildings for a mile round the spot have been destroyed wholly or partially. Of course any in the immediate vicinity of the Magazine are razed to the ground or blown completely out of sight. Of the Magazine itself nothing is left but a heap of charred ruins. The latest information as to the number of people who suffered by the explosion gives eleven dead and two hundred and fifty wounded.

A monk was noted amongst the rescue party conspicuous for his courage and indefatigable efforts. His fine tact and administrative powers soon placed him at the head of the willing workers; he was, in fact, the brains of the impetuous crowd. Yet he was unknown and a stranger. It would be interesting to learn something more of this heroic nature; but it is buried, I suppose, in the heart of the church. How his pulses must have thrilled to be working thus once more heart to heart with the people! Nor was it an ordinary gang of workmen that was to be seen there blackened by the terrific clouds of dust and smoke. Monks, Sisters of Charity, soldiers, firemen, and civilians worked side by side with breathless anxiety, cheered on by the

King, who, as he sprang into the ruins and tore away the stones with his hands, received round after round of acclamation from the ordinary workpeople of the crowd. Not until all the wounded were carried away did King Humbert leave the spot, and then it was for the Hospital, where he presented himself. To quote an Italian paper, the *Tribune*: 'No one would know that it was a sovereign who entered the ward. His blue suit was covered with a stratum of powder, his face was black and agitated with emotion, as he went from bed to litter with words of comfort and consolation for each sufferer. His boots were soiled, his hat crushed in, &c. As he left the Hospital he was received with loud *vivats* by the people crowding behind the cordon.'

The damage done to Rome has not yet been correctly estimated. In the eye of the artist and tourist it is apparently incalculable. We hear that the rare vases of the Etruscan collection in the Vatican gallery have shared the fate of the windows of Rome. Nearly all the galleries, palaces, and churches are closed for repairs. Some have suffered more damage than others; and it seems as though the most valuable of the stained-glass windows are most hopelessly wrecked. The streets glitter with crystals; so do the aisles of such churches as one can still enter.

Only a week ago we were luxuriating in the beauty of St Paul's *fuori i muri*. We could not tear ourselves away from that superb nave with its five pillared aisles, radiant in the gorgeous flames of light shed from the coloured windows beyond. Raising our eyes we confronted the gaze of these stately Apostles in their robes of purple, crimson, and gold, their grand heads looking with ineffable peace, ineffable dignity across the shadowy aisles. And now! all are a memory, for of St Paul's not one window remains to tell posterity of the beautiful works of art our eyes that day had seen. And Moroni, the artist who created these stately figures, whose cunning hands designed these treasures of St Paul's—alas! he is now but dust, and has carried his secrets with him to the grave.

So it may readily be seen that an Eldorado of gold could not repair the damage done to Rome by this terrific explosion.

DUMARESQ'S DAUGHTER.

CHAPTER XXVI.—DESPAIR.

THEY carried Psyche up to her own room, and laid her on the bed, and tended her carefully. 'She's been affected like this more than once before,' Haviland Dumaresq said with a pang of remorse, trying to minimise the matter to his own conscience, 'though never quite so seriously, perhaps, as to-day. Poor child, poor child! It's strange how sensitive natures respond to a stimulus. She's been watching this campaign with such singular interest; and the suddenness of the shock, after such hopes aroused, shows how much she's been over-exciting herself all along about it.'

As for Ida Mansel, she held her peace, and guessed the truth, for even Girtton had not wholly extinguished her feminine instincts.

They poured a little brandy down Psyche's throat to revive her, and gradually and slowly she came to herself again. She never once uttered Linnell's name, and nobody about her alluded to him in any way. 'Tell me what was in the paper!' she said, with the calm of despair; and they read it aloud to her—every word of it ungarbled. She listened with her face buried deep in the pillow. 'Is that all?' she asked, as Ida Mansel ended. And her father answered in a choking voice: 'That's all, my darling.' After which she lay a long time silent.

At last she turned round and with a terrible calmness looked up in their faces. Her eyes, though open, were singularly vacant. 'Why don't you light the candles?' she cried like a peevish child. 'It's so very dark. All dark, everywhere!' And she flung her hands about her with a curious impatience.

Haviland Dumaresq stood up in his horror. The candles were burning on Psyche's dressing-table, and the little white room was as bright as daylight. With an agonised face he looked down at his daughter. 'Don't you see me, Psyche?' he cried, all aghast. 'Look up at me, darling. Try hard. Don't you see me?'

Psyche groped out at him with extended arms. 'Where are you, Papa?' she asked quite innocently. Then she fell back in her place and burst at once into a flood of tears. She was glad she had that cloak to cover her sorrow with. Too proud to acknowledge the meaning of her grief, she could at least let it loose under false pretences. She could cry as much as she liked for Linnell now. They would think she was only crying for her own blindness.

That same evening a telegram went up to London, addressed to the greatest oculist of the day, begging him in terms of urgent entreaty to come down at once to a new patient at Petherton.

And Haviland Dumaresq had reason to bless the blindness too, in his own way, for it took him off for a while from his remorseful conscience, and concentrated his thoughts upon Psyche's condition.

All the next day, Psyche saw nothing. And the day after that, and the day after that again.

But the eminent oculist who had come down post haste from town to see her, and who came down each evening again by the last train to watch the case—so profound was his admiration of the Encyclopædic Philosophy—held out to them the happiest hopes for her recovery, after a short interval. It was a purely nervous affection, he said with confidence: functional, functional: no cataract, no disintegration, no structural disease: the merest passing failure of the optic centres. It was all in the brain, he assured them with great assurance many times over. They had every hope. There was nothing to despair about.

Every hope! No hope for Psyche. Nothing to despair about! While blank despair hedged her in and environed her! How little they know about hearts, these doctors!

At first she fancied there might yet be a chance. Not for her, of course: that was nothing; but for her painter. All was so vague and uncertain at Khartoum. Youth is loth indeed to give up all for lost. So young a love, so soon crushed out: impossible! impossible! And even the papers, the London papers, those wise, sagacious, omniscient papers, held out doubts at first as to Gordon's death. Well then, if as to Gordon's, why not also as to Linnell's just equally? She could not believe he was dead, with that day unexplained. She could not think an explanation would never come. She hoped on against hope, till all hope was impossible.

Slowly and surely her faith gave way, however. Each fresh day's telegrams brought fresh grounds for doubting that any living soul had escaped the massacre. Deserters brought in news of the two or three Europeans still held in horrible slavery in Khartoum; and Linnell's name was not among them. Day by day, the terrible certainty grew clearer and ever more clear to Psyche that her lover lay dead in the heart of Africa.

And yet, strange to say, the specialist was right. Psyche's blindness was only temporary. Hour after hour, as hope gradually sank and died out within her, her eyesight was slowly but surely restored to her. In three or four weeks, she was as well as ever—to all outer view—as Ida Mansel observed her. But her heart—her heart was crushed within her.

Weeks rolled on, and months passed by, and the fate of all who had fought at Khartoum grew from time to time more fixed and certain. Spring returned, and with it Geraldine Maitland. For that congenial companionship Psyche was glad, as far as she could be glad for anything now; for Geraldine was the only living soul with whom she could talk—not freely, but at all—about her lost painter. To her father, she never even mentioned his name: the subject was a sealed book between them. It was too awful a shadow to recognise in speech. There are ghosts one can only pretend to avoid by strenuously ignoring them in the bosom of the family. Haviland Dumaresq knew in his own soul he had sent Linnell away to his grave; but he had done it for the best; he had done it for the best. No man is responsible for the unseen and unexpected contingencies of his actions. We must be judged by our intentions, not by results. How could he know the young fellow would run away with the precipitancy of youth into danger's mouth? All he wanted was to protect Psyche. His sole object in life, now, was his daughter's happiness.

His daughter's happiness! Oh futile old philosopher. If only men and women would just be content to let each of us live his own life, undisturbed, and not scheme and plan and contrive so much for the happiness of others—how very much happier we should all be for it!

Haviland Dumaresq had meant to take Psyche up to London for the season that coming spring, and introduce her to those powerful friends of his—for he had friends, not a few, in virtue of his apostolate—by whose aid she was to make that brilliant marriage which he still wildly dreamed for her in his opium ecstasies. He had even, by superhuman efforts, provided beforehand the needful money for going into lodgings, good fashionable lodgings, for some months in town, where he might launch his Psyche upon the great world of London; and Ida Mansel, most practical of heads, had promised to find an eligible tenant meanwhile for the Wren's Nest, at the usual rate of furnished houses at the seaside in early summer. But when May came round—that smileless May—poor Psyche's heart was still so sore that Haviland Dumaresq shrank himself from putting his own plan into execution. It would only spoil her chances in the end to bring her out while this mood was upon her. After all, he thought, there was plenty of time yet. His rosebud was still so young and fresh: no need to hurry. Let her get over this girlish fancy first about a blighted heart: girls are so plastic; and then, when she'd forgotten her supposed romance—young people take a hysterical delight in imagining themselves unhappy—he could fulfil his plan of taking her up to town, and give her a fairer chance in the matrimonial lottery with the gilded youth of our teeming London.

For at Petherton, Haviland Dumaresq was a very small person; but in London, he knew, more than one rich man's son would be proud to marry Haviland Dumaresq's daughter. In that mighty mart, where everything finds its level so soon, even true greatness is more justly and generously appraised than elsewhere. The provincial celebrity sinks at once to his proper place; but then, *en revanche*, the truly great man who ranks in his shire but as a third-rate personage finds himself in London duly estimated at his right worth by a more critical audience.

So the spring and summer passed slowly away; and autumn came again, and with it the anniversary of Linnell's departure.

All through the summer, Psyche's eyes had troubled her again from time to time; but she thought very little about her eyes now: of what use to her were they? The only thing on earth she cared to see was gone for ever. They would never help her to see her painter again. For despair itself becomes at last a sort of sacred cult, a mysterious pleasure.

Still, in a certain vague indefinite way, without herself attaching much importance to the subject, Psyche dimly noticed a change in the character of the disease. Though she saw very well for most of her time, she observed that the periods of dimness were much more frequent now than of old, and the periods of total loss of vision, when they came, remained far longer and were altogether more persistent in every way than in the early stages. She recognised to herself, with a strange uncomplaining Dumaresquian acquiescence, a fatalistic acceptance of the order of the Cosmos, that she was slowly going blind, for no particular reason, but merely because the will to see was failing her.

She concealed it as far as she could, of course, from her father. She couldn't bear to vex the old philosopher's soul, to pile on that pathetic unsuccessful life one more great failure. He loved her so dearly and was so proud and fond of her. To be sure, it was only putting off the evil day. But Psyche put it off with all her might for all that. Papa was old and far from strong. Psyche knew in her heart he couldn't live many years longer. Why vex his last days needlessly with this final burden? Was it not enough and more than enough that that great soul should find itself in old age poor and broken and weighed down with sorrow without adding that last straw to complete the disaster? The pathos of Haviland Dumaresq's nobly wasted life sufficed as it stood: Psyche at least would do her best to conceal from him whatever might add to his misery.

So she strove hard to hide from him her growing blindness. If the dim fit seized her as she sat and read, she would lay down her book and remain sitting and talking without showing it in any way till her eyes began slowly to resume their function. If it came upon her when she was out walking on the downs with her father, instead of going on and groping her way, which would have betrayed her case, she would pause and pretend to be scanning the landscape, or would sit down on the turf and pull grasses by her side, while her father looked on and never suspected the reason for her wayward conduct. Now and then, to be sure, circumstances arose where it was impossible wholly to conceal the facts. She might be reading the paper aloud to her father, and be compelled by that sudden mistiness of the words to break off all at once in the middle of a sentence: or she might be walking down the quiet main street of Petherton, and find the visible world in one moment of time transformed into a vast blank of darkness before her. But even so, she noticed one curious fact. These blind fits overcame her least often in her father's presence; and by a violent effort of will, when he was by, she seemed able actually to command her eyesight. The strong stimulus of a vivid desire to save him needless pain conquered the weakness and feebleness of nerve which alone made the solid earth thus fade into nothingness before her eyes at a moment's notice.

Nay, in her father's presence, Psyche even pretended not to feel sad: she tried hard to bury her grief from his eyes: for his sake, she would still appear to be young and joyous. Though her heart ached, she would still play lawn-tennis on the Maitlands' court and still talk nonsense, hateful, light-tongued nonsense, with the mild-eyed young curate. She was her father's daughter, and could she not walk in her father's way? Had she not inherited his iron nature? Her heart might break, indeed, but no daw should peck at it. She kept her sacred sorrow locked up securely in her silent breast. And there, it succeeded in eating her life out.

With Geraldine Maitland, however, she was less careful of concealment, at least as regarded her fits of blindness. The two girls walked and talked on the downs much together; and it often happened that in the midst of their conversation

Psyche's feet and tongue would falter unawares, and she would put out her hands to grope her way before her through the thick darkness that all at once enveloped her steps. As the summer wore on—so Geraldine noticed—these sudden failures grew more and more common. On one such occasion, indeed, when they were strolling along the face of the east cliff, near the tumbling sea, the world became a sudden blank to Psyche, and she sat down despairingly on the short smooth grass, with her sightless eyes turned toward the waves and the warm sun of summer.

'What's the matter, dearest?' Geraldine Maitland asked in her sympathetic way, for Geraldine when she wished could be very womanly.

'It's all gone again,' Psyche answered with a sigh. 'Oh, Geraldine, it all goes so often now. I don't feel as if I'd strength to fight against it, even for Papa's sake, any longer.'

Geraldine's face was very grave. 'What does your father say about it, Psyche?' she asked seriously. 'He ought surely to take you up to town to a doctor.'

'Oh, no; not that!' Psyche cried, shrinking back with infinite horror. 'I don't want doctors to go cross-questioning me and torturing me any more. I can bear it all, if I'm only left alone; but I can't bear being worried and cross-examined and bothered by dreadful men about it.'

'But what does your father think?' Geraldine persisted still. 'I'm sure he ought to do something to set it right again.'

'He doesn't know—or he hardly knows at all,' Psyche answered quickly. 'I've kept it from him as much as I can. I don't want to cause him any needless trouble.'

Geraldine held her peace and answered nothing. But in her own mind she had decided at once what was the proper thing for her to do. She would tell Haviland Dumaresq that very day how Psyche fared, and would urge him to take some competent medical opinion.

That evening, Psyche took tea at the Maitlands'. She noticed the General, always bland and polite, was even blander and politer than usual in his demeanour towards her. His courtesy had in it a touch of that tender and chivalrous gentleness which old soldiers, more perhaps than any other men, know how to display on occasion to a woman in distress. Even Mrs Maitland, as a rule so painfully cold and distant, unbent a little that day to the motherless girl. She called her 'My dear' more than once, and it was not the 'My dear' of conventional politeness with which women hold one another off far more effectually than with the coldest courtesies: it was the 'My dear' of genuine feminine interest. After tea, too, Psyche observed that Geraldine slipped away for a quarter of an hour on some vague excuse, though she didn't attach much importance at the time to her sudden departure. When Geraldine returned, her eyes seemed somewhat red from crying, and she gave no explanation of where she had been, further than to say with an evasive smile that she had run out for a bit on a little private errand.

At seven o'clock, Psyche returned to the

Wren's Nest. She opened the door with a noiseless hand, and walked unexpectedly into the little drawing-room. For a moment the haze gathered over her eyes; as it cleared away she saw to her surprise her father, that strong man, sitting bowed and bent with sorrow in his easy-chair, his hands clasped hard between his open knees in front of him. Tears were trickling slowly down his bronzed cheek; his attitude was eloquent of utter despondency. On the table by his side stood a little glass bottle—quite empty. Psyche, in her sudden speechless terror, remembered to have seen it on the mantel-shelf that morning, full of those little silver-coated pellets which she somehow associated in her own mind—though she couldn't say why—with her father's frequent and distracting headaches.

'Why, father dear,' she cried, flinging one arm round his neck in an access of sudden energetic sympathy, 'what on earth does this mean? What's the matter with you, darling? And why—is the bottle—on the table—empty?'

Her father looked up at her and nodded his head slowly and despondently. 'It's lost its effect,' he answered in a very hollow voice. 'It's lost its effect altogether, I'm afraid. One after another, I've taken them in turn, and found no relief from this tremor of my nerves.—I never took so many in my life before.—I was frightened myself when I wanted another and found I'd taken the whole bottleful.—They do me no good; they do me no good now. What can I turn to, to relieve me from this misery?'

'Father!' Psyche cried, with a sudden burst of horrible intuition, 'it isn't opium? Oh, for Heaven's sake, tell me, it isn't opium!'

The old man drew her down to him in a wild spasm of remorse and affection. 'My darling,' he cried in the fervour of his regret, 'don't ask me its name! don't put any name to it! Forget it, forget it: I never meant you should know. But whatever it was, Psyche, from this day forth, for your sake, my child, I solemnly promise you, I have done with it for ever!'

There was a moment's pause. Then Psyche said again: 'Was it that that was troubling you when I came in, Papa?'

Haviland Dumaresq looked back into her deep blue eyes with those truthful eyes of his. He was too organically moral to mince a lie with her. 'No,' he answered shortly, though with a terrible wrench. 'It was not, Psyche.'

Again there was a pause. Then Psyche whispered very low once more: 'Has Geraldine Maitland been here this evening?'

Haviland Dumaresq groaned, but he answered, without one moment's hesitation: 'Yes, Psyche.'

Psyche drew over a chair from the wall and seated herself beside him. She held her father's hand in her own, tenderly. For three minutes those two who loved one another so strangely sat there in silence. At last Psyche looked up and said in a very low voice: 'Well, Papa?'

Dumaresq put one hand to his forehead and sighed. 'To-morrow, Psyche,' he said in a dreamy way, 'we go up to London. I want to take medical advice about myself—and I shall seize the opportunity at the same time of asking Godichau's opinion about your eyesight.'

Psyche dropped his hand resignedly, 'As you will, Papa,' she said in a very soft whisper. 'But

I never wanted to trouble you, myself, about so small a matter.'

And all that night she lay awake and cried—cried in her silent, tearless fashion.

THE ORNAMENTAL USES OF NUTS AND SEEDS.

MANY kinds of seeds, fruit-stones, nuts, and beans are employed for making necklaces, bracelets, and for other ornamental purposes in various countries. The vegetable-ivory nut, the coconut shell, and many other hard species, are carved into pipe-bowls and various fancy articles, and are susceptible of a high polish. The woody rinds of the calabash fruit and of some gourds form indispensable articles of domestic use among aboriginal races in a semi-civilised state, serving all the purposes of glass and earthenware for holding water, food, and oil; drinking-cups, spoons, and snuff-boxes are also made of them; and many are painted and ornamented. Out of the small rind of the bottle-gourd are formed the drinking-cups for the Paraguay tea, and the water-vessels of India.

Some of the economic uses, chiefly decorative, of many of these, gleaned from different sources, combined under one heading, may not be without interest, as showing how widespread is the ornamental application of nuts and seeds.

The large seeds of the Necklace Tree of the West Indies, of a brilliant red hue, with a black spot at one end, have been often used for sleeve links and shirt studs. The red seeds of the coral flower are also used for ornamental purposes. The fragrant kernels of *Prunus Mahaleb* strung as necklaces are much valued by the women of Sind and other parts of India. Snuff-boxes are made in Natal and Gaboon by the natives of the seed of *Oncoba spinosa*. In the Portuguese settlement of Ambriz, Africa, the seeds of the Custard Apple are strung upon thread for necklaces; and in the Kew Museum are rosaries made of olive seeds and other fruit-stones. The dry seeds of the Sacred Lotus (*Nelumbium speciosum*), also known as the Pythagorean bean, are often strung as beads. The black nuts of *Putranjiva Roxburghii* are made into necklaces and rosaries, and are worn by the Brahmins, and also put round the necks of children to keep them in health and to ward off disease caused by evil spirits.

The seeds known as Nicker beans and Bonduc nuts, species of *Guilandina*, are often used for bracelets, necklets, and rosaries, and are very ornamental when capped and set. Baskets and other fancy articles made of them are very common in most museums. There are two species, *G. Bonducella*, the seeds of which are of a gray leaden colour or a slaty olive green; and *G. Bonduc*, which are pale yellow or orange coloured. In the Malay Archipelago these seeds are used as counters and playthings by children in place of marbles; and on the Gambia in playing a game called warree-warree. In Bombay, strung upon red silk, they are worn by women as a charm; and also in Egypt by women and children as amulets against witchcraft and sorcery. They are sometimes known as the fever-

nut, being a powerful tonic. The small round black seeds of *Canna indica* are used by the Burmese for sacred beads and by Hindus for necklaces. They are called in Guiana, buckshot, for the natives use them as shot in their blow-pipes.

The hard bony seeds of the Bladder-nut are in some parts of Europe threaded for paternosters and made into necklaces and chaplets. The small black soap-nuts, or kernels of *Sapindus saponaria*, take a fine polish, and are threaded as necklaces, rosaries, bracelets, and other ornaments. The Quandong nuts of Australia are frequently strung as necklaces and bracelets and also mounted as scarf-pins.

Several kinds of hard brown beans have been utilised for making bracelets and other ornaments. Their plainness and monotony are varied by gilt or steel studs and settings, and small beads intermingled with ornamental pendants. The horse-eye bean, the seed of *Mucuna urens*, is really ornamental and curious when mounted for bracelets. The large brown sword-beans of species of *Entada* have been made into spoons, snuff-boxes, small coin-cases, scent-bottles, &c. The small brown seeds, something like apple pips, so commonly used, when strung thickly together, for bracelets, work-bags, nets for the hair, and other ornamental work, are the produce of *Desmanthus virgatus*. They are frequently dyed black for effect. The bright scarlet seeds of *Adenanthera pavonina* are used as jewellers' weights in India, each being about four grains. They are also strung and made into necklaces. In the West Indies they are known as Circassian seeds.

The small shining red seeds of *Abrus precatorius* are largely used by the Indian goldsmiths as weights, each weighing about 1.75 grains. It is stated that the famous Koh-i-nur diamond was first weighed by the *rati*, a word which by some authors is supposed to have given origin to the jewellers' carat, from the Arabic *kirat*. The carat is the twenty-fourth part of an ounce, or three and one-sixth troy grains; this approximatively would be equal to two of these seeds. They are sometimes called crab's eyes, from a fancied resemblance to those objects; and in the West Indies are known as jegerity seeds, being extensively used for necklaces, ornaments for the ears, and to decorate small boxes, baskets, &c. Strung as necklaces, they are considered teething remedies for young children. The fact of their being used as rosaries doubtless suggested the specific name of 'precatorius.'

The stone from the succulent fruit of the common bead-tree or Persian lilac is used all over India as a bead. They are perforated and strung into necklaces and rosaries. During the prevalence of epidemics of smallpox, &c., they are suspended as a charm over doors and verandas to keep off infection. The nuts of *Euonymus grandiflorus* are made into necklaces; and the red seeds of another species are strung into ornaments for the head in India; the seeds of *Gyrocarpus Jacquini* are also made into rosaries and necklaces.

The stones of certain kinds of dates, like those of Rosetta and Burlos, being rather large, are carved and pierced to make beads for rosaries. The stones of a species of *Canarium* (often called

peach-stones) are beautifully and elaborately carved by the Chinese; and when set in gold, or separated by gold filigree beads, form exceedingly handsome brooches and bracelets. Amoy is renowned for this kind of work; and some of these beads cost a dollar each, a very large sum when the slight remuneration in China for skilled labour and the cost of native living are borne in mind.

The furrowed sculptured bony fruit of the *Elaeocarpus* being freed from the pulp form handsome necklaces, which are not uncommonly set in gold or silver and sold in the shops. The hard endocarp of *Elaeocarpus serratus*, and the beads of another species, are largely exported from the Eastern Archipelago to Arabia, Persia, and India, for ornaments of all kinds, necklaces, bracelets, and rosaries or chaplets. The five-grooved and elegantly-tubercled nuts of *E. Ganitrus* are worn as a necklace by the followers of Siva in order to gain his graces and a passport to heaven. They are also supposed to preserve the health. Considerable importance is attached to the number of facets on the seeds. They are commonly known as Brahmín's beads. Those of *Monocera tuberculata* are used for a like purpose in Travancore.

Necklaces and bracelets are made of *Mimosa* seeds. At the Colonial Exhibition held in London in 1886, in the West Indian Court there was a very large display of ornamental articles made of nuts and seeds. The very hard seeds of *Symplocos spicata*, about the size of a pea, and resembling minute pitchers, when perforated, are strung like beads by the natives of India and put round the necks of children to prevent evil. The green seeds of *Dalbergia Sissoo* are worn by Santal girls as pendants from the ear. In Tahiti the natives make crowns and necklaces with the red seeds of *Pandanus odoratissimus*.

A seed much used for ornament is that which bears the popular name of Job's Tears. The old botanist Gerarde thus describes it: 'Every graine resembleth the drop or tear that falleth from the eye.' There are, however, now three or four well-marked forms of this seed met with in India, which differ from each other in shape, colour, and degree of hardness, and in the presence or absence of grooves or furrows along the length of the hardened involucre. Dr Watt of Calcutta thus enumerates them: There are three types of shape—a long cylindrical or tubular, a normal pear-shaped condition, and a flattened spheroidal form. The cylindrical grain is always of a white colour, smooth, polished, not furrowed, but constricted towards both extremities. This is collected for ornamental purposes only, and not as an article for food. The pear-shaped form varies in size and colour, pale and bluish white, gray, yellow, or brown black. The flattened spheroidal kind are often yellow, or even pink. The two principal forms are—one almost round and either white or black. This form is sometimes, though less frequently, used for rosaries and ornamental purposes, but chiefly for food among the hill tribes of India. The second form is tubular, about half an inch long. This is extensively employed for decorative purposes, the dresses worn by the Karen women being often completely covered with embroidered designs of this grain.

It is also used in Siam, and by the Naga and other Assam tribes, in the construction of earrings and other simple and elegant articles of personal adornment. Necklaces of these seeds are frequently worn; and baskets and other ornamental articles are occasionally decorated with them, especially those made in Nepal. The Angame Nagas construct elegant earrings in which a rosette of these seeds surrounds a greenish beetle wing. These grains seem to stand a good chance of coming into more general use in Europe in the construction of artificial flowers, laces, bugle-trimmings, and other such purposes, for which glass beads are now used; and possibly also in Catholic countries for the manufacture of rosaries.

The seed-vessel of the Sandbox Tree is known as Jack-in-the-box, Monkey's Dinner Bell, &c. It is from the noise caused by the bursting of the fruit that the plant gets its curious names. It is used both as a pounce-box and a letter-weight. Large walnut shells are frequently mounted with hinges and used as ornamental cases for Limerick gloves, rings, jewels, and miniature articles for presents. The nut of *Balanites Roxburghii* is employed in fire-works in India as crackers. A small hole is drilled in it, from which the kernel is extracted, and being filled with powder and fired, bursts with a loud report, so exceedingly hard is the shell. The hazel nut has lately been mounted in silver as an appendage to a brooch or bracelet for ladies.

The vegetable-ivory nut of commerce is the albuminous seed found in the drupes of a dwarf palm. From these nuts European turners fashion the reels of spindles, small boxes, and many other little fancy articles, which can be coloured with sulphuric acid.

Passing to other seeds of palms, we find several utilised for decorative purposes. Betel nuts, the produce of the *Areca* palm, are chiefly used as a masticatory by the natives of the East. They are too small to be applied to many ornamental uses; but are occasionally employed by the turner and wrought into different kinds of fancy-shaped beads for bracelets, small rosary cases, and other little fancy articles. In the Museum of Economic Botany at Kew there is a walking-stick made of these nuts, sliced, mounted or supported on an iron centre. The cocoa-nut shell after being dried and scraped forms the Indian hookah, which is used by all classes for smoking tobacco. In Malaysia, the shell, under the name of Parut, is used for children's games. It is taken between the two feet and sent as far backwards as possible by a twist of the foot. The cocoa-nut shell also furnishes drinking goblets, which, carved exteriorly and mounted in silver, are a great ornament. Small articles, as baskets, ladles, spoons, and other such domestic articles, are made of it. Beads for rosaries are also turned from the shell.

The hard mottled nuts called 'coquillas,' the produce of a South American palm, used to be imported to the extent of several hundred thousand a year, but are now scarce. They take a fine polish, and were shaped by the turner into various small ornamental and useful articles, such as knob-handles for cabinet drawers, for walking-sticks, parasols, bell-pulls,

small fancy-boxes, &c. The hard stony seeds of the Tucuma Palm and of the Macan Palm are susceptible of a high polish, and are sometimes fancifully carved into rings, 'birios' or knitting-pins, &c.

The fruit of the Talipot Palm is hard like ivory, and is extensively employed in the manufacture of beads for Hindu devotees, which are known in trade as Bazarbatie nuts. A considerable trade is done in these nuts from Bombay, the supply coming apparently from North Kanara and Ceylon. They are sometimes coloured red and sold as coral, or are made into small draughtsmen, little bowls, and other ornaments. In Europe they are now largely employed in the manufacture of buttons.

The kernel of the fruit of the Doum Palm is turned into beads for rosaries; and is also made into little oval-shaped boxes for holding snuff. These have a small opening at one end, stopped by a wooden peg. The speckled albuminous seeds of an African Sagus are carved into little figures by the negroes. The hard nut of the Dwarf Palm is in Algeria turned into chaplets, bracelets, and necklaces, which are esteemed for their pretty veinings of various colours.

From this enumeration it will be seen that, by skill and ingenuity, many nuts and seeds which have little or no commercial value are, however, utilised for ornamental purposes.

MRS HARRINGTON'S DIAMOND NECKLACE.

CHAPTER II.—CONCLUSION.

MRS HARRINGTON's fine eyes had never looked more brilliant and more malicious than when they rested on the pale but composed countenance of the tutor as he quietly entered the saloon leaving Freddy by the hand.

'Excuse my somewhat abrupt summons, Mr Cunningham,' she said, speaking very courteously, though there was a ring of covert triumph in her clear tones that warned Ralph that she meant mischief. 'But a circumstance has occurred which renders it imperative that I should speak collectively to every member of this household.'

Ralph bowed, but made no reply, though he could not repress the slightly sarcastic smile which played upon his lips as he noted the judicial formality of her manner.

'This morning—indeed, not more than an hour ago, I found that, probably during the night, I have been robbed of a very valuable diamond necklace. My maid, Morris, and I at once made a careful examination of the room where, as most of you know, I am in the habit of keeping my jewels. We found, much to our surprise, that the room had not been entered from the outside: the window was securely bolted, and there were no signs whatever of any evil-minded person having effected an entrance in that way. I am therefore forced to accept the other explanation of this extraordinary affair—namely, that my room was visited by some one from inside. Of course, it is just possible that the thief may have gained admittance to the house from some other

part of the premises, and found his or her way to my apartments; you, Walters, will be better able to speak with authority on this point than I can. Will you tell us if you found any door or window open this morning?'

The old butler, who had served his mistress faithfully ever since her arrival at the Hall as a bride, twelve years ago, at once declared that he could solemnly swear that no signs of burglary had been visible when he went his rounds early that morning. A look of genuine concern was on his honest countenance as he met Mrs Harrington's eye, and certainly the most suspicious woman on earth would have instantly acquitted him of having had anything to do with the disappearance of the necklace.

'Has anything else been missed? Is all the plate intact?' queried Mrs Harrington.

'There is nothing missing, ma'am. If you will examine the strong-room'—

'I am quite ready to take your word,' interrupted his mistress with a smile that strove to be kindly.

'My daughter tells me that she also has lost nothing,' she continued.

'Mr Cunningham, can you say the same?' Her cold bright gray eyes were suddenly flashed on the tutor.

'I have lost nothing,' he answered quietly.

'Then it seems that the thief was contented with my necklace for spoil.'

Here the servants looked at each other with dismay; it was clear to the meanest understanding that Mrs Harrington suspected that some inmate of the Hall was the thief. There was a low buzz of whispers as their mistress ceased speaking; the cook and butler exchanged a few words, and then the latter spoke out.

'We are all agreed, ma'am, that the fairest thing to everybody would be that our boxes should be examined. No one has left the house this morning. If, as I fear you think, ma'am, the thief is here present'—

'I think nothing of the sort, Walters; I have only mentioned the facts of the case, which I certainly think go to prove that the thief gained admittance to my apartment by the door, and not by the window. At anyrate, I intend to place the affair in the hands of a person more competent to decide on the matter than myself. Directly I made the discovery that I had been robbed, I despatched my maid to the station to telegraph to Leatherhampton for the inspector of police, who, I expect, will arrive in less than half an hour. In the meantime I desire that you will all remain in the saloon.'

The servants again exchanged glances of consternation. Such an unprecedented occurrence as this would furnish food for gossip in the servants' hall for many a year to come. Even the presence of their mistress and the uncomfortable chill that had suddenly fallen on the assemblage did not silence the hum of whispered talk among the men-servants and the maid-servants, who waited with what patience they could command for the next act in this tragedy-comedy of the mysterious burglary.

The half-hour expired at last. Mr Cunningham had throughout maintained an attitude of polite indifference; Gladys had been studiously silent; and little Freddy, who had only half understood

the scene, still clung to the tutor's hand with an expression of mingled wonder and terror in his big brown eyes. Mrs Harrington had seated herself in one of the deep easy-chairs scattered about the saloon, and made a pretence of glancing down the columns of a newspaper. Her face was pale and her lips firmly set; but the hand which held the newspaper shook slightly, thus betraying the emotion she strove so hard to hide.

The arrival of the inspector of police was a relief to every one. Mrs Harrington briefly explained to him what had occurred, and her reasons for supposing that the theft of the necklace had been accomplished by an inmate of the Hall.

'Such a suspicion is of course very painful to me,' she finished; 'but under the circumstances, Mr Inspector, though I deeply regret the necessity, I think it better for the satisfaction of all concerned, that I should accept the offer made by my servants, and request you to search their boxes.—You, Mr Cunningham,' she added suddenly, addressing herself to Ralph, 'will, just for form's sake, undergo the same unpleasant ordeal.'

For an instant the tutor's self-possession was disturbed; the colour rushed to his face, and he was about to make some protest against the indignity, when a warning glance from Gladys checked him. 'Most certainly,' he said, 'when Mr Inspector has searched the servants' rooms he is quite at liberty to ransack mine. I will remain here with Miss Harrington and the servants while the examination is in progress,' he added.

Mrs Harrington and the inspector left the saloon, and again the hum of whispered conversation was audible. Gladys, with a queer smile on her beautiful lips, sunk into the chair her step-mother had quitted, and turned her attention to the newspaper which had served that lady as a pretext for silence during the purgatorial half-hour that had followed on her strange exordium.

Ralph seated himself at some distance from Gladys, and Freddy nestled at his side with a look of puzzled anxiety on his childish face. Once Gladys looked across to the tutor; the look said plainly: 'This ordeal must be borne for my sake. I love you, and trust you; cannot you trust me?'

Ralph smiled an affirmative, and let his thoughts drift into a pleasant channel than that of Mrs Harrington's enmity, her plot to ruin him, and the strange upshot thereof.

An hour passed; the whispers of the servants were hushed; their curiosity was on tiptoe, for in the silence that had suddenly fallen on the saloon they caught the distant sound of the inspector's deep bass voice, and the rustle of Mrs Harrington's silk dress descending the stairs. The search was over; what had been the result?

In another moment the lady and the inspector advanced to the table in the centre of the saloon. Mrs Harrington's eyes flashed full on Ralph's face, and for the moment the mask of courtesy she had hitherto worn in his presence was lifted; and hatred, rage, and baffled malice looked out at him from under her level brows.

'Have you found your necklace, Madam?' said the tutor.

'I have not; the thief has probably hidden it too well,' was her biting reply.

'On his or her person, perhaps,' suggested Ralph ironically. 'Allow me to set an example, which no doubt others will be glad to follow.—If you, Mr Inspector, will come up to my room, I will gladly submit to a personal search.'

Mrs Harrington was shamed at last. There was no mistaking the significance of the tutor's words. He had found out the abominable plot she had concocted, and he meant her to know that he had done so.

'I cannot allow such an indignity to be put upon my son's tutor,' she said, dropping her eyes.

'Mr Inspector, you are witness that I have offered to submit to a personal search; Mrs Harrington declines to avail herself of my offer.'

The inspector, understanding that there was more in the affair than met the eye, bowed respectfully to the tutor, and then asked Mrs Harrington if she desired him to prosecute any further inquiries.

'Certainly,' she answered defiantly. 'I have had a valuable article of jewellery stolen from me under most extraordinary circumstances. I wish no pains or expense spared; and I offer a reward of one hundred pounds for any information that shall lead to the discovery and apprehension of the thief.'

The inspector pulled out his pocket-book and instantly made a note of this; then turning to Mrs Harrington, asked whether he had her permission to interrogate each member of the household in private.

'Most certainly; I give you *carte blanche* in the matter,' the lady replied. 'But as the unfortunate affair has somewhat upset my nerves, I shall now retire to my own room. I leave the further conduct of the case to you with the greatest confidence.'

With this gracious speech Mrs Harrington left the saloon and remained invisible until dinner-time. The intervening hours were spent by the inspector in cross-examining the servants, in a minute investigation of the premises, and in making copious notes in regard to every item of evidence he elicited. About six o'clock the worthy official took his departure; and every man, woman, and child at Harrington Hall breathed more freely when relieved from the overwhelming majesty of the Law, individualised in that awe-inspiring personage.

When Mrs Harrington rang her bell to summon the faithful Morris to assist at her evening toilet, that valued factotum appeared in tears and with an open telegram in her hand. She had just received the distressing intelligence that her father, a respectable publican, residing at Holloway, lay dangerously ill. Would her kind mistress allow her to go up to London by the last train? She, Morris, would break her heart if 'anything happened' to her dear old father, and she, his only daughter, was not there to receive his dying blessing.

'Of course you may go. I am very sorry to hear of this trouble.—When is the next train?' said Mrs Harrington sympathetically.

'There is one at seven, ma'am.'

'Then go by that; you have half an hour to get to the station.'

'But who is to dress you for dinner, ma'am?'

'Send Jane to me; she will be able to do all I want.'

With profuse thanks and tears, Morris left her mistress, packed a small bag of necessities, and was driven off to the station by a sympathising groom, who had long cherished an admiring regard for the comely abigail, and was believed to entertain matrimonial intentions on her behalf.

Dinner that night was a disagreeable ordeal alike to Mrs Harrington, Gladys, and Ralph. The first was slightly sulky and ashamed; the second, covertly indignant; and the third, though outwardly self-possessed, was bitterly aggrieved at the humiliating position in which Mrs Harrington's treachery had placed him.

When dinner was over, Gladys pleaded a headache as an excuse for going straight to her own room; and Ralph strolled out into the garden to smoke a cigar, a sedative which he sorely needed. But he was not fated to enjoy his 'weed' in peace, for he had scarcely established himself in his favourite nook in the shrubbery when he caught sight of a white gown through the trees, and in another moment Gladys, looking pale, scared, and agitated, seated herself at his side.

'What has alarmed you, darling?' he said, flinging away his unfinished cigar and encircling her with his arm. The poor girl was breathless and palpitating, and her eyes were dilated with alarm.

'Oh Ralph!' she panted, 'that horrid necklace!'

'Has it been found?' queried Ralph sharply.

'No; it is gone—really and truly gone, this time. When you brought it to me this morning and explained my step-mother's wicked plot to disgrace you, I was tempted to fling the miserable thing into the lake there. But I remembered how she valued it: it was one of my father's wedding presents to her, and is worth two or three thousand pounds, I believe; so I hid it away in my dressing-case, as I told you I would. But just now, when I went to look if it was safe, I found that it was gone.'

'You locked your dressing-case, of course. Has the lock been tampered with?'

'I think not; but you know how careless I am about keys and things. When I changed my frock at luncheon-time, I probably left the keys in the pocket. At anyrate the necklace has been taken from my dressing-case by some one. Oh Ralph, it seems as if my step-mother is to be punished for her cruelty to you! Just think what a wicked thing—to go to your room and hide her miserable diamonds in your portmanteau, and then to get up that wretched comedy in the saloon, hoping to disgrace you before the servants and every one, because she was determined to—to part us.'

'But, dearest, this is not a time to ponder Mrs Harrington's misdeeds. The question is, who has taken the diamonds, and how are we to recover them?'

'Perhaps mamma has taken them herself. She would be quite capable of purloining my keys and—'

'Hush, hush, Gladys; don't be hard on her.'

'You may forgive her, but I never can,' cried the girl passionately. 'Just think what your position would have been had you not found that tassel of beads!'

'You would have believed me innocent, Gladys?'

'I? Oh Ralph, darling, of course I would! I would stake my life on your honour and truth. But think of the cold, stealthy treachery of a woman who could creep into your room and deliberately plan a thing so wicked and so mean!'

'My dear girl, do try to be calm. That necklace must be found. Do you think any one could have overheard our conversation this morning?'

'It is just possible; we were sitting on this very bench,' said Gladys, looking round at the shrubs, growing thickly on three sides of the seat, which was placed in a sort of alcove of closely-cut laurels and yews. 'A path leading to the stables runs just at the back. Could any of the servants— But no; I don't believe any of them is capable of theft.'

'I think we shall be forced to assume such a possibility,' said Ralph gravely. 'The first thing to find out is if any one has left the Hall during the afternoon or evening. I scarcely think that a thief would attempt to hide the jewels in the house after this morning's affair.'

'No one has left, I am sure, except Morris, mamma's maid.'

'Hum! Do you know why she left?'

'She had a telegram from home summoning her to her father's sick-bed.'

'Do you know anything of Morris's antecedents?'

'Oh Ralph, surely—surely you don't suspect her! Why, she has been years at the Hall, and my step-mother has the greatest confidence in her.'

'Didn't Mrs Harrington say this morning that Morris was the messenger she despatched to the station to telegraph to Leatherhampton for the inspector?'

'Yes; but—'

'Then, my dear Gladys, I think we have a clue; but for the present we must keep our suspicions to ourselves, and wait the course of events. Meanwhile, I shall do a little detective-work on my own account.'

During the next two or three days Mr Inspector paid frequent visits to Harrington Hall; but no further evidence was elicited, and the diamond necklace robbery still remained enveloped in mystery. Ralph's amateur detective work had, however, not been equally barren of result. On the morning following Gladys' discovery of the real theft, he paid a visit to the station, and learned from the telegraph clerk that Mrs Harrington's maid had despatched two telegrams on the previous morning, one to London, the other to Leatherhampton. Ralph tried hard to get a sight of the telegraph forms; but the man declared that to allow such a breach of official discipline would be as much as his place was worth.

On his return from the station Ralph confided to Gladys the result of his inquiries; and the two conspirators decided to follow up the

clue thus obtained, and to place the affair in the hands of Mr Jonas Lynx, a noted private detective in London. While the country police were leisurely deliberating on what steps to take in regard to the Harrington Hall burglary, the experienced Mr Lynx had discovered the whereabouts of Miss Julia Morris, had satisfied himself that the respectable Mr Morris of Holloway was a purely mythical personage, and that the place where Miss Morris was living was the temporary headquarters of a gang of light-fingered gentry with whom she was closely connected—her brother being a distinguished member of the Fraternity of the Skeleton Keys and Crowbar. He also identified that clever young woman as one Sarah Brown, who, fifteen years before, had picked oakum in one of Her Majesty's jails for a term of twelve months. Three days later Ralph was informed that Miss Brown, alias Morris, had been arrested at Liverpool when about to go on board the screw steamer *Hawk*. The diamonds, however, were not in her possession, the stones having probably been unset within a few hours of their appropriation, and sent over to Amsterdam, where they were placed in the right hands for sale. At anyrate, Mrs Harrington's diamond necklace ceased to exist, and that amiable lady thus paid dearly enough for her treachery.

But the consequences of her malicious deed did not end with the loss of the jewels. Not only was she compelled to appear in court and give evidence against her former maid, but she suffered untold agonies of mind lest Morris should divulge the fact that the diamonds had been stolen not from Mrs but from Miss Harrington's dressing-case, and that further revelations might be made. Morris, however, perhaps in the hope of using her knowledge for the purpose of extorting blackmail from her late mistress when her term of penal servitude was over, discreetly held her tongue; and therefore only Mr Lynx, Gladys, and Ralph knew the whole story of the Harrington Hall burglary. Many of the details could only be surmised, but it seemed probable that Morris, in passing through the shrubbery on her way to the stables, had overheard the conversation between the lovers, and perceiving that even if she were found out, how unlikely it was her mistress would venture to prosecute her for the theft, had conceived the daring idea of abstracting the necklace from Miss Harrington's dressing-case.

Yet another retribution was in store for the unhappy Mrs Harrington. Gladys suddenly assumed a violently bellicose attitude towards her step-mother, and threatened to tell the true story of the robbery to her guardian, Lord Roseford—a gentleman who was universally respected in the county for his almost fastidious ideas of honour.

'You have shown no mercy to me; I will show none to you. Give your formal consent to my marriage with Ralph, and I promise to keep your wicked secret. If you refuse, I will go straight to Lord Roseford and beg him to find some other home for me than Harrington Hall.'

'You undutiful child, how dare you speak to me so!' moaned Mrs Harrington, quailing before the flashing eyes of her step-daughter.

'It is your own fault. If you had not tried to ruin the man I love, I would have waited

three years for him. Now, I mean to marry him in three weeks.'

What could the unhappy woman do? Gladys was thoroughly roused; she was quite capable of making an *esclandre* that would be the talk of Grass-shire for years.

In the end Mrs Harrington did what most women in her position would have done—gave in; and Gladys kept her word. Three weeks later the following advertisement appeared in the first column of the *Times*: 'On the 17th July, at Harrington, RALPH CUNNINGHAM, M.A., late Fellow of St John's College, Oxon., to GLADYS, only daughter of the late Giles Harrington of Harrington Hall, Grass-shire.'

And Mrs Lamprey said to Mrs Smalman: 'What a dreadful *mesalliance*; but I always knew what would be the result of Mrs Harrington's imprudence in throwing that Mr Cunningham with poor, dear headstrong Gladys!'

SOME OLD TAVERN WAYS.

Shall I not take mine ease in mine inn?

THE spread of luxury and comfort, so strikingly apparent nowadays, is nowhere more so than in those establishments which take the place of the inns and hosteleries wherein our forefathers tossed off their sack and canary, swore royster-ing oaths, and exchanged many a broken head. The modern 'restaurant' or 'wine-bar,' or even plain 'public' with its garish mahogany, stained-glass and gilding, its plenitude of tankards and glasses, its imposing array of gas-lamps, or it may be electric light, and last, but by no means least, its bevy of sirens skilled in the arts which captivate the lounge, are strikingly different from the old-world tavern with its gable roof, innumerable apartments, paucity of furniture, and busy lads in white aprons. Our ancestors were evidently made of sterner stuff. They went to a tavern to drink, and cared little for surroundings provided the wine were good and the service ready. Take for example, the inventory of the 'stock in trade and furniture of a tavern in Bishopsgate' in 1612, a house boasting the appropriate sign of 'The Mouth,' and a very thirsty mouth too, no doubt. First come the drinkables: '7 hhd. of Orliance wine, £17, 10s.; 1 butte of Malligo, £17; 1 runlett of sherry sacke containing 16 gallonde, 32s.; 1 hhd. of old clarett, 16s.; 2 dussion and 8 bottles of ale, 5s. 8d.;' and so forth. Next the contents of the various rooms: 'The Percullis: 1 long table with a forme, one oyster table, one little cubbord table and one court cubbord, one old wyne stoole, and a payre of playing-tables, 24s. 8d. The Pomgranatt: 1 olde table with a forme, 3s. 4d. The Three Tuns: 1 little standynge carpenters table with 2 stools, 2s.; and so on, with little variation through the 'Crosse Keys,' 'The Vyne,' 'The Kings Head,' and other chambers. The 'boarded partitions' belonging to these apartments are valued at 20s.; but in strange contrast to these beggarly appointments we read of '15 small drinkynge bowles of silver, one brode bowle and 2 beakers, one greate saulte, a trencher saulte and 2 silver spoones weighing 154 ozs. at 3s. 10d., £37, 4s. 4d.'

To sit on a hard bench in a room whose sole

remaining furniture was an equally bare and unsightly table, and drink out of silver goblets, strikes one to-day as a strange anomaly. In 'The Barre' are found the measures of the hostelry: '2 gallon pottes, 5 pottle pottes, nyne quarte pottes, 8 pynte pottes, one half-pint potte and a gylle potte.' Only one solitary half-pint measure to nine of a quart capacity! Truly, an indication that 'short drinks' were not much in favour with the gallants who frequented the 'Mouthe,' swaggering in with a clatter and noise much at variance with the semi-maudlin state in which, if contemporary chroniclers are to be trusted, they staggered out again after their repeated potations.

The custom of naming the different rooms is familiar to all who have read our Elizabethan writers. Who does not at once recall those immortal scenes at the 'Bear's Head' in which that magnificent old scoundrel Jack Falstaff played so prominent a part? How the madcap Prince and his companion Poins so sadly perplexed the unfortunate Francis with his everlasting 'Anon, anon, sir,' and his interjected orders to 'Look down into the Pomegranate.' It was customary, it seems, to have small windows or loopholes between the various apartments, for what reason it were perhaps hard to say, unless to facilitate that interchange of compliments customary between parties who were using different chambers in the same tavern. These courtesies usually took the form of the present of a piece of sugar wrapped up in white paper which the waiters kept ready to hand. Our forefathers were fond of correcting the acidity of their wine by this addition, and it was quite the correct thing to send by the drawer one of these packets to the neighbouring apartment if any friends or acquaintances were there.

There is a story anent 'Rare Ben Jonson,' worth giving here. He was at a tavern when Bishop Corbet came into the next room. Ben called for a quart of *raw* wine, and gave it to the tapster: 'Sirrah,' says he, 'carry this to the gentleman in the next chamber, and tell him I sacrifice my service to him.' The fellow did so. 'Friend,' says Corbet, 'I thank him for his love; but prithee tell him from me that he is mistaken, for sacrifices are always burnt'—an allusion, of course, to the practice of heating wine, so frequently met with at this time. The spectacle of the bishop and the playwright exchanging compliments and bandying jokes in a tavern shows that the union of 'Church and Stage' was not such a far-off dream even in those early days. Manners differ, however; and it is scarcely likely that we shall hear of the Bishop of London and Mr Irving discussing the question over a bottle of wine at a Strand bar.

It seems to have been expedient, if not necessary, to cultivate a certain acquaintance, not to say familiarity, with the 'drawers'—attendants whose duty, as is obvious from their title, was originally to draw the wine from the casks, but who were probably after a time merely waiters, fetching and carrying to and from the cellar. Dekker, in his *Gull's Hornbook*, says: 'Your first compliment shall be to grow inwardly acquainted with the drawers to learn their names and dive into their inclinations. The use which you shall make of this familiarity is, that if you want

money five or six days together, you may still pay the reckoning with the most gentlemanlike language: "Boy, fetch me money from the bar." Does not Prince Hal declare: 'Sirrah, I am sworn brother to a leash of drawers, and can call them all by their Christian names. They call drinking deep, dying scarlet. But sweet Ned, to sweeten which name of Ned I give thee this pennyworth of sugar, clapped even now into my hand by an under-skinker.' Bishop Earle, in that curious little collection of satires which he calls *Micro-cosmographie*, has a satirical word to say of the tavern and its attributes. 'The drawers are the civilest people in it, men of good *bringing up*, and howsoever we esteem of them, none can boast more justly of their *high calling*.' He is very severe, though not unduly so, judging from many other accounts we have of the habits of Jacobean times. 'The taverne is a degree above an alehouse, where men are drunke with more credit and apologie. It is a broacher of more newes than hogs-heads, and more jests than newes, which are sukt up here by some spongie braine. Men come here to make merry, but indeed make a noise. A melancholy man would finde heere matter to worke upon to see heads as brittle as glasses, and often broken. A house of sinne you may call it, but not a house of darknesse, for the candles are never out.'

What was chiefly drunk in these bare and comfortable rooms, with more mirth and laughter perchance than accompany our more decorous meetings? Sack—that favourite beverage, whose identity has puzzled almost every commentator on the period—of course comes first. The word at once brings before us the 'fat knight,' that mountain of ribaldry and wit, who towers above all his compeers on a footing not to be easily shaken; dissolute, dishonest, unctuous, plausible, yet withal jolly and lovable Jack Falstaff. He seems to have been everlastingly imbibing sack. Was he not tauntingly called 'Sir John Sack-and-Sugar?' (An epithet, by the way, bestowed in certain parts of the country on an evil spirit in the times when witchcraft and devilry were believed in.) Did not the tavern bill surreptitiously abstracted from his pocket contain nearly eight shillings debited to the account of his favourite beverage, while bread was ignominiously dismissed for a solitary halfpenny! 'Oh, monstrous,' indeed.

What, then, was this 'sack?' From the constant mention of sugar in connection therewith, one may not unnaturally conclude it to have been an acid wine; but beyond this, there is little to go by. Its price some two years after Shakespeare's death was, according to Peacham, two shillings a quart; but its precise character seems veiled in obscurity as thick as the fumes to which it doubtless often gave rise in the craniums of too ardent devotees. We know that the Bard has committed an anachronism in allowing Falstaff sack at all, since, until the time of Henry VIII., the vintners sold no wines but 'white and claret,' all others being dispensed by the apothecary for medicine. This, however, is but a trifle compared with the gain we have in those glorious scenes from which we have quoted. It has been supposed to be a corruption of *vin sec*; or so called from being carried in a sack, 'as the Spaniards do;' or, according to Ritson, 'a liquor

compounded of sherry, cider, and sugar.' But whatever it may have been—and space precludes such discussion here—certain it is that it held high favour for generations, and quenched the thirst of many a noble gentleman and many a ruffling blade from Tudor to Stuart. Claret, Alicante, Brown, Bastard, were all favourite drinks of the time, the first-named apparently little esteemed, judging from the low price.

The use of sugar and spices with wine was not confined to sack. Our worthy ancestors were very sweet-toothed old fellows, and loved to modify the taste of the grape by infusing all manner of appetising accessories. Here are a couple of receipts for compounding tasty beverages, both taken from an unpublished manuscript of 1611: 'Raw wine prepared with honey and spices, called Clared, is made often of ten parts of whyte wine, one part of honey with a sufficient quantitie of cinnamone and ginger.'—'Raw wine prepared with sugar and spices, called *Vinum Hippocraticum*, commonly Hippocras, is usually made of ten parts black wyne, five of white, one of sugar, cinnamon, ginger, cloves, and a little musk(!). This kynde of artificiall wyne is a very pleasant drink, and is to be drunk after meat.' What digestions they must have had!

But such devices were legitimate, and indeed looked for. The tavern customer of the seventeenth century liked to have his palate tickled by these mysterious concoctions; what he did not bargain for were some of the nefarious and artful manœuvres resorted to by the unscrupulous vintner, of which we will briefly notice a few. Does not our old friend the hero of Gadshill exclaim with indignant emphasis: 'Here's lime in this sack too! There is nothing but roguery to be found in villainous man.' Putting lime into the wine seems to have been a pretty constant practice, as one finds it frequently referred to by the old authors. Sir Richard Hawkins notices the fact that 'since Spanish wyne came into vogue, they are for conservation mixed with lime;' which caused dropsy and other dire disorders, not forgetting our old enemy 'the gouttes.' It seems also to have been used with ale, judging from Robert Greene's remark that 'a Christian exhortation to Mother Bunch would not have been amiss, that she should not mixe lime with her ale to make it mightie.' When Bardolph desired an engagement as tapster from Dame Quickly, do we not remember that he quoted in his own favour his ability in 'frothing and liming?' the former process consisting in surreptitiously introducing a modicum of soap into the glass or tankard, in order to produce a goodly 'head' on the liquor.

But these are by no means all the dodges practised on unwary tipplers. There is extant a curious little tract of great rarity, called: 'In Vino Veritas, or a Conference betwixt Chip the Cooper and Dash the Drawer, discovering some Secrets in the Wine-brewing Trade,' which, though somewhat later in date (1698) than the period we have been glancing at, may serve as a fairly accurate picture of the state of affairs for some time previous to its publication. Under the influence of the contents of their master's cellar, these two gentlemen give some very instructive and curious hints as to the mysteries of their craft. We learn how good

wine was 'lowered' and eked out with 'Freeze, a sorry cider;' how raw beef was thrown into 'fretting wines' for them to feed upon; how a 'Brother of ours that lives not far from Ludgate Church, boasted that he had drawn Champagne, Burgundy, Chablais, and other curious and costly wines out of the very same cask!'—a feat reminding us of the conjuring entertainments of our boyhood, when that wonderful gentleman in evening dress poured all sorts of liquors from a single bottle.

Then, too, it seems to have been the custom to 'tip' the drawer a few pence to procure better wine, 'whereas, alas! we must draw such as our master orders;' so the too generous drinker might have kept his money for some better purpose; and no wonder the speaker confesses that 'a brazen face is essentially necessary to our profession,' and that 'we drawers laugh loud and long at those poor animals that resort to our houses.'

To give the vintner his due, however, we must take it that his customers also had their faults, and that the trade was not without its drawbacks. Dekker's advice, that 'no man counterfeit himself drunk to free his purse from the danger of the shot,' points to a rather shabby custom of trying to obtain refreshment at the very low price of nothing, a custom prevalent, he says, 'amongst gentlemen.' It is to be feared he was rather a bad judge of the article. He gives two other admonitions—namely, 'Not to look at the bill, look only at the total;' and 'At your departure, to kiss mine hostess or to accept the courtesy of the cellar' (that is, a complimentary glass); with which recollection of social amenities as practised in the days of King James, we take our leave of the subject and close these notes.

THE OLD STUDIO.

By THOMAS ST E. HAKE.

IN THREE CHAPTERS.—CHAP. I. THE MASTER.

A CERTAIN house, standing on the Thames' bank above Battersea Reach, was a noted landmark for many years. From its pointed gables and stacks of crooked chimneys, down to its terrace by the river-side, it showed signs of antiquity, and with it neglect. There were deep cracks and wrinkles in the brick walls; and the terrace balustrade was crumbling, like a row of old teeth, and fast falling to decay. A green mossy coating covered the stonework; and in the crevices there were weeds and coarse blades of grass. At the corner of the terrace was a notice-board leaning over the water as on crutches; and upon this board was written, in washed-out letters, 'To be Let on Lease.' With the light of the sunset upon it, exposing all these weak points to view, the house would scarcely seem to have a long lease to run. Its windows were thickly coated with dust, except the two large terrace windows. These were as scrupulously clean as the spectacles on the face of an old person.

When the sun had set and the remaining light upon the river was fast ebbing like the tide, these terrace windows were thrown open. The interior, as it now appeared, was a large and lofty studio—a studio crowded with pictures—some in their frames and some without; some turned towards

the walls; and others partly hidden by pieces of antique furniture and statuettes. Standing in the midst of this *debris* was a tall handsome man of forty or forty-five. His sensitive face—indeed, his whole attitude—showed him to be deeply absorbed in giving the last touches, with hand and soul, to the life-size picture of a young girl. His look was fervent: it expressed something more than artistic ardour for the work almost achieved. He seemed to worship the picture as much as though there were actual life in the eyes, half shadowed by their own dark lashes; in the half-parted lips that seemed on the point of speaking. The pretty head in this painting was thrown back, and rested on the high arm of an old chair into which the girl had sunk. The hands were clasped behind the head, and the white arms were half hidden by the masses of auburn hair. This figure was so delicately draped, so masterfully conceived in every detail of light and shadow, that it seemed to symbolise the twilight that still lay in the western sky.

The last touch had been given; and the brush had been thrown aside. A troubled look now came over the artist's face. He turned his eyes towards a corner of the room where a quantity of drapery was arranged, where a quaint oaken chair stood in the foreground with tigers' skins lying about. It was the look of one who saw something beyond the old chair and the drapery around it: it was the look of the poet who in his fancy had placed the figure there, just as it reposed in the painting before him. He stood with his head bent and with a look of tears in his eyes before this empty chair, as though something that he loved was gone out of his life and yet was in some way present. A knock at the hall door startled him. It was now dark, and he hastened to light the chandelier and to draw the heavy curtains across the windows. This done—though not before the knock had been repeated—he went out to open the door. A young fellow came quickly in, and received a warm welcome from the artist. As they crossed the hall—a dark echoing place, with a great winding staircase—the artist placed an arresting hand playfully on his friend's shoulder and said: 'Stay, Fenwick; not so fast. You are always so impatient.'

'Of course I am, Millward,' was the reply. 'I have come on purpose to'—Fenwick stopped abruptly; they had entered the studio while speaking, and the picture had caught his eye.

'Who is she?' Fenwick said at last, and in a tone almost of supplication, as he glanced at the artist and then round the room.

A slight shade came over Millward's face, but he made no answer.

'I recognise her,' Fenwick went on, his eyes resting once more upon Millward's painting, 'in nearly all your pictures; and I have often asked you who she is.—Ah!' he added, laughingly, 'she's some lady of title, I suspect—some lovely princess, whose incognita you have sworn to preserve; for you seldom show any one except me any work that has this face in it!—Have I made a shrewd guess this time?'

Millward shook his head and drew a deep sigh, which he made no effort to conceal.

'Then why not introduce me to your beautiful model? Why, she must have been here a thousand times! How is it I've never seen her?'

Millward laughed in rather an odd way, as Fenwick thought, and raising the window-curtain, looked out eagerly upon the river, but only for a moment. Sinking back into a seat, he replied: 'My dear Fenwick, what motive could I have for keeping you and any model of mine apart?'

Fenwick was on the point of answering, when the sound of oars on the river, close under the window, reached his ear. Millward had risen, and again drawing a fold of the curtain aside, glanced out, and then turned to his friend. 'Excuse my leaving you,' said he, hurriedly. 'It's old Gunning come to take me on the river.'

'You won't be long?'

'No.'

'Then I'll amuse myself while you're away,' said Fenwick, 'by studying your picture.' He threw himself as he spoke into a chair in front of Millward's painting and lit a cigarette. 'By the bye,' he added in his laughing way, 'why not bring back the model with you?'

He regretted his words the moment they were uttered, they appeared to produce such a painful effect upon Millward. His face grew deeply troubled; he looked round the studio distractedly, tried to speak, then turning away, went quickly out.

Fenwick watched him cross the terrace. It was now bright moonlight on the river. A boat had dropped alongside, and a man who looked like an old sailor was securing the boat against the strong ebb-tide. Millward took his place in the stern, and the boatman began to pull up stream. Fenwick noticed that his friend looked eagerly about him as the skiff made gradual way against the current. Re-entering the studio and again seating himself before the picture, Fenwick looked at it long and earnestly.

For some years past John Fenwick had been Millward's pupil; and ever since the day he had come to him, and had caught glimpses of this lovely face peeping out among the many pictures that had always crowded the studio, he had felt great curiosity about the original. But the pupil could never persuade the master by any device to even speak of this model; and Fenwick would long ago have been convinced that the model had no existence—none outside the artist's brain—had not some new picture periodically filled him with wonder and unutterable delight. For Millward constantly reproduced her, not only with all the maturing beauty of face and form—just as a young girl would mature as days went by—but he seemed to gain greater mastery over his art. The girl that Fenwick now looked upon in this picture was a maiden of twenty or twenty-one, in all the perfection of her womanly beauty. But a strange surmise—a very strange one on Fenwick's part—had suddenly come to him. He had often watched the master, when he knew him to be too deeply abstracted to be conscious of being observed, giving some life-touch to a painting of this mystic girl; and then it was that the thought flashed upon him, as Millward's far-off look would return to the canvas, that the spirit of this beautiful model was in the studio, visible only to the master.

Fenwick sat there, before the painting, pondering these things. If he could but conjure up such a vision—if such a beautiful shadow-form

would only but once appear to him! This picture of Millward's, this marvellous work, had awakened in him a deeper and more passionate love of art. This was his ideal—the model he sought for everywhere. With such a model to paint from, he might even aspire, some day, to produce a masterpiece, as Millward had done.

He took up a pencil and opened a sketch-book, seized with a sudden and irresistible impulse to make some beginning; and he soon became so absorbed in his work, so impressed with the idea of a spirit-model wandering about in this old studio, that he never heeded when the sound of oars came faintly in from the river. A momentary thought occurred to him that Millward was coming back; but as the sound gradually ceased, the recollection of it also ceased, and this pencil-sketch held possession of his fancy. It was soon finished—an excellent conception, one that might develop on canvas into a work of art in which the master would discover something, perhaps, more than mere promise of future greatness. But how could it ever come to that—ever come within sight of his ambitious design, unless a model comparable with Millward's could be found?

Impossible! He threw down his pencil and sketch-book in despair. He had half risen from his seat with the intention of lighting another cigarette, when a slight movement of the window-curtain caught his eye. In another moment a young and shapely hand, with long expressive fingers, grasped the folds and held them back. And scarcely had Fenwick decided to conceal himself behind one of the numerous objects of art that encumbered the studio, when the curtain was lifted still higher, and the figure of a girl with a face like the one in Millward's picture came timidly in with the moonlight.

AT A NORTH-COUNTRY HORSE-FAIR.

NOTWITHSTANDING the inroads of modern monthly auctions and the facilities of carriage to city markets, the ancient institution of local fairs for the sale of farm-stock of all kinds still survives and flourishes in certain districts of Scotland. Regularly yet, as the accustomed day returns, farmers and dealers from far and near gather at their immemorial place of meeting to do business or to see what is going on. One may wonder how the date is remembered. No advertisement of the approaching function appears to be made; nevertheless, as if by intuition, early on the morning of the wonted day the roads of the neighbourhood begin to be alive with wayfarers of all sorts making for the wonted spot, and the fair never fails. It can be understood how the recurrence of a great gathering like Falkirk Tryst on Stenhousemuir should be memorable enough; some of the stock which appears there for sale has to be on the road for weeks beforehand. But lesser gatherings are attended with as much regularity, and the fact would seem to illustrate how far habit in a quiet existence may become a second nature.

There are sheep-fairs and cattle-fairs and feeding-fairs, the last being a half-yearly market for the engaging of servants. But a character all its own belongs to the horse-fair. Its tone is racier than that of the others, horse-dealing being pro-

verbially a business requiring peculiar shrewdness, and affording plentiful opportunity for sharp practice. Half an hour at a gathering like that of the Moss o' Balloch gives one a glimpse of some curious customs and some odd types of character, with a breath of an atmosphere quite of its own sort.

A noisy scene it is, between the shouting of rustic jockeys, the neighing and trampling of beasts, and the vociferations of the motley crew of camp-followers who manage to make a livelihood at such gatherings in a hundred nondescript ways. One has to keep his eyes about him, or in an unsuspecting moment he may be knocked over and trodden into the turf by some wildly-galloping cart-horse exhibiting its action. Since early morning the constituent parts of the fair have been coming in. First of all, the refreshment vendors—decent innkeepers of the neighbourhood who have obtained a field-license for the day—busied themselves with erecting their canteens of rough boards. Then the amusement providers, some of whom had encamped on the ground all night, began to set up their rough booths and stands of all sorts. Presently the beasts began to arrive, rough-coated nags mostly, in strings of a dozen or twenty, each string led by a wild cateran of a groom, mounted without saddle on one of the steeds. Last and most important, the sellers and possible buyers themselves put in an appearance—old farmers joggling along comfortably behind easy ponies, and young fellows, vain of their turn-out, who endeavoured to come upon the ground with some show and dash—and by eleven o'clock the business of the day is in full swing.

Foremost in the field are the dealers, a race of quick, sly wit, shrewd and voluble, leading a somewhat rough and haphazard life. Worth more, as a rule, than they seem to be, some of these loud-voiced, broad-shouldered men tramping about heavy-shod and whip in hand among their beasts, may be tenants each of half-a-dozen farms, and be able to put upon the market six or seven score horses of all sorts. Each man's turn-out is ranged by itself, generally a motley array. Every other minute some one of the steeds will be picked out from the row and sent trotting, galloping, and capering about the field, to show its paces before a possible customer, a good deal sometimes on a lucky day being made by the ragged hangers-on who act as grooms and jehus. Horses for sale are known by the fact of their wearing rope halters; while a wisp of straw plaited into the tail intimates that an animal has changed owners.

It is somewhat amusing to watch a couple of dealers or a dealer and some bluff old farmer on the point of completing a bargain. The intending purchaser has cautiously gone over the points of the horse—lifting its feet one after another to inspect the hoofs, examining its teeth to make sure of its age, and finally watching it trot and gallop down the field. As the animal is being led back at a walking pace the farmer turns slowly round. The dealer's hand goes up in the air: 'Twenty-five pound! Say the word.' 'Twenty-four,' says the farmer doggedly. 'Split the difference—twenty-four ten and she's yours.' 'Done, then!'

The dealer spits in his palm, and the two men's hands come smack together, the bargain being

completed by that occult proceeding. Forthwith the money is paid, the expectant groom receives his 'consideration,' and the steed is led away by its new owner.

All bargains of course are not quite so promptly concluded. Occasionally the two men will be seen standing for several minutes, each with hand in air ready to seal the transaction, but haggling over the difference of a few shillings, and perhaps doing no business after all. Sometimes, though not so often as might be supposed, an adjournment to one of the neighbouring cantens assists or celebrates the changing hands of stock.

As might be expected, the gentler sex is conspicuous by its absence from the field. Exceptions to the rule, however, there are. A good woman here and there, a widow perhaps, carrying on her husband's farm, may have come to purchase a dairy pony. With skirts tucked well up out of the mud, these managing women, pretty certain as to what they want, may be seen stepping energetically out and in among the animals, taking no advice unless themselves assured of its reason, and by no means getting the worst of a bargain when it comes to actual business.

A few gentlemen's coachmen may be observed making purchases for their masters' stables; and, investors of a very different class, hucksters of the countryside and small 'merchants,' here and there hang about to pick up anything cheap enough for their purpose. One of these, a coal-merchant, one year bought a steed for a pound; but afterwards considered himself badly aggrieved, as he purchased one at next fair for seven-and-sixpence.

But besides the actual sellers and buyers in such a scene, there is always a motley crowd of hangers-on, the peculiar race who make it their business to attend fair after fair in continual succession throughout the country, practising devices of familiar antiquity, and getting a living by their wits anyhow. There is the 'cheap-jack,' whose voice can be heard all day from his cart hectoring his crowd of rustic customers with a strident 'Sold again! 'Alf a crown for the next lot!' who sells or 'gives away' more watches in an afternoon than many jewellers do in six months, and whose rapid transference of hard-earned money from other pockets to his own in exchange for utterly worthless trifles affords a striking illustration of the advantage possessed by brains over mere muscle.

There are shooting-galleries, presided over by young ladies of fascinating aspect, insinuating address, and picturesque if somewhat faded attire—young ladies who, amid all their rude surroundings, are perfectly well able to take care of themselves. 'Aunt Sally' is in evidence in all her glory, ready to undergo any amount of ill-treatment for a modest consideration, even rewarding, woman-like, her most skilful attackers with gifts of brown-paper cigars and other valuables. There is the invariable cocoa-nut man, ever ready to demonstrate the ease with which a nut may be thrown through the hole in his board, and equally ready with a consolatory and encouraging word to his customers when they miss. And wandering minstrels of all sorts—tatterdemalion pipers, fiddlers, and penny-whistle players—seeking to inspire at once the patriotism and

the generosity of the crowd, are to be both seen and heard about the field.

Naturally at a horse-fair there is not so great a gathering of the showman element as at a feeling-fair, the great patrons of the shows, the farm-servants, being present in fewer numbers, the inspiring influence of their sweethearts being lacking, and the occasion altogether being a less jovial one. Nevertheless, somehow, a sprinkling of the minor caterers of amusement always appears, and without the presence of these the function would want one of its characteristic features.

A strange rude life they lead, these Bohemians of the hedgeside and the country byways; and the peep behind the scenes which is here and there afforded by their rough-and-ready camping arrangements suggests curious speculation upon the advantages of a contented spirit. Something of romance still lingers about these people and their ways. Among them yet, mingling with the various flotsam and jetsam of civilisation, is to be found a remnant of the Ishmael Romany, that dreamy-blooded, passion-haunted race, doomed to wander the earth with a destiny unfulfilled and to disappear. And under the primitive rag tent and within the curious houses on wheels lingers yet in actual fact the material of many a strange story.

People travel far to east and west every year to study types and manners; but in many a corner like this near home, if time were given to the study of it, it would still be possible to discover things sufficiently quaint, interesting, and suggestive.

A SUMMER SOLITUDE.

BROAD slopes, robed regally in purple ling,
Where green moist moss and scented thyme lie hid;
And harebells hang the wind-stirred grass amid;
And ferns and foxgloves fringe the peat-stained spring.

Here flames a yellow tuft of furze, and there,
A narrow patch of vivid colour shows
The ant-built hillocks where the cistus grows;
And ruddy bracken starts up everywhere.

The scattered sheep stray singly o'er the waste;
Above, the plover sounds his plaintive pipe;
Out yonder rise a pair of startled snipe,
And seek fresh shelter with a timid haste.

And far out west there gleams the wide gray main—
A silver glory where the sun-sprite spills
His subtle charm—and 'neath the northern hills
Faint smoke goes up of cities of the plain.

A silent solemn place and holy ground,
Where God speaks in a still small voice, which they
Hear not who hurry by; but those who stay,
And hearken, catch the tender whispered sound,

And hearing, gain a strange, strong peace of heart;
A new sweet patience for the pains of life;
A calmer courage for its stern fierce strife;
A conscious power to do a nobler part.

G. DUNCAN GREY.

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